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## *The Northeast Iowa Science Fair*

Clifford G. McCollum  
State College of Iowa

The first Northeast Iowa Science Fair was held on the campus of State College of Iowa (then Iowa State Teachers College) on March 20, 1954. Approximately 140 exhibits from eighteen schools were observed and judged. This was the first Science Fair associated with the National Science Fair to be held in the State of Iowa.

For a number of years preceding 1954, the Department of Science of the State College of Iowa had been sponsoring a Conference of Secondary Science Teachers sometime during the spring. There was a growing dissatisfaction among the science staff members with the results of these conferences. There was also increasing interest in developing some type of activity in which high school science students could be directly involved. The 1953 National Science Fair was held at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Two of the science department staff members, J. W. Kercheval and Leonard Winier, attended this National Fair to explore possibilities for holding a regional fair in Cedar Falls. The contacts made at Oak Ridge and the program observed there led to the decision to hold the first Northeast Iowa Science Fair and Conference of Secondary Science Teachers at State College.

J. W. Kercheval was named director of the Fair. A committee of the science department was named to assist. The Board of Regents (then State Board of Education) made four four-year tuition scholarships available as awards. The Waterloo Daily Courier agreed to co-sponsor the event and to assist financially and with publicity. Four other business and industrial firms in Waterloo and Cedar Falls made contributions to aid in sending finalists to the National Fair.

The program included morning lectures, science films, campus tours, exhibit-viewing, and an afternoon lecture-demonstration followed by the presentation of awards. Science supply firms and publishers were asked to supply awards and a very worthwhile group were made available. The two students selected to exhibit at the National Science Fair were Mary Ploog and Jim Gohman. When they went to Purdue University the next month, Jim Gohman won a first place award at the National Science Fair. The Northeast Iowa Science Fair was off to a good start.

Since that first Fair, nine others have been held. The general pattern has remained much the same. The list of sponsors increased as the years went by, and a number of specific awards have been made available from various organizations and societies.

In 1961, student presentation of papers describing research problems was added to the morning program. This was continued in 1962 and 1963. Only modest success was achieved with this addition since numbers of students giving papers were always small.

The number of exhibitors increased steadily from one year to the next during the first six years. In 1959, 298 students from 52 schools exhibited projects. As more regional fairs became established in the state there was a leveling-off of the number of exhibitors at a somewhat lower figure. Approximately 2,130 students exhibited projects at the ten Northeast Iowa Science Fairs. Public interest in viewing the exhibits has remained at a high level.

The directorship of the Fair was a very burdensome responsibility, in

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**NEWS AND NOTES—(continued)**

of NSTA which will be held in Des Moines at the Fort Des Moines Hotel. National leaders in science education have been scheduled for the program. Several ISTA members are members of the planning committee and will be involved with the sessions.

All members should attend. This will be similar to a national convention and yet one near enough for all to attend rather easily. This will be an opportunity for ISTA to host NSTA visitors from five surrounding states. Mark the date on your fall calendar!

**NORTHEAST SCIENCE FAIR**

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spite of the fine cooperation of the sponsors and the wholehearted assistance of a large number of the science department staff and students. Therefore, a practice was followed of changing the directors every two years. The following faculty members of the Department of Science, State College of Iowa, have served as directors: J. W. Kercheval (1954 and 1955); R. A. Rogers (1956 and 1957); Leland L. Wilson (1958 and 1959); Verner Jensen (1960 and 1961); Verlin Lee (1962 and 1963).

The students selected to exhibit at the National Science Fair have been very successful in winning significant awards and recognition. First-place awards were won by Jim Gohman (Teachers College High School, Cedar Falls—1954) and Susan Hopkins (East High School, Waterloo—1956). Other significant awards were won by David Ecklein (Cedar Falls High School—1959), Mary Sue Wilson (Price Laboratory School—1959 and 1960), Bryce Ecklein (Cedar Falls High School—1960), William C. Leighty (West High School, Waterloo—1961), Mary Ann Dieckmann (West High School, Waterloo—1962), and Carol Ann Marvitz (West High School, Waterloo—1962).

The tenth Northeast Iowa Science Fair was held March 30, 1963. It was quite successful. Interest of visitors was still high. Quality of exhibits

**Last Issue of Volume One**

This April issue represents the last of volume one. The Board of Directors of the Iowa Academy of Science will be deciding the fate of the journal on April 15. Comments concerning the future, desired changes, etc., should be forwarded to the editor well before this date.

ISTA is indebted to the Iowa Academy of Science for sponsorship of the Journal. The Academy has provided nearly one hundred per cent financial support for this first year's effort.

and projects was good. There were more junior high school exhibitors than there were from senior high schools. The staff of the Department of Science of State College of Iowa had been considering the past two years whether it should continue its sponsorship of the Fair. There was growing interest in developing more of a seminar and symposium for high school science students and their teachers. Therefore, it was decided after the 1963 Fair that the college staff would relinquish its directorship of the regional fair. No other group was interested in directing it, so there will be no 1964 Northeast Iowa Science Fair.

A Science Symposium was held on the campus of State College of Iowa on March 13 and 14, 1964. This meeting included a conference for secondary school science teachers and a college scholarship competition for high school seniors. It is hoped this program has continued the objective met so well by the Northeast Iowa Science Fair, namely, "The Encouragement of Young Scientists."

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Luncheon meeting of Science Teachers of Southwest District April 13, band room, Thomas Jefferson High, Council Bluffs. Plans for district science meetings to be discussed. Send reservations to Agnes Spera, Thomas Jefferson High.